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**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JOEL HEFLEY  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AND FACILITIES**

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**HEARING ON THE FY1999 BUDGET REQUEST  
FOR THE MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND MILITARY FAMILY HOUSING PROGRAMS  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
(PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THE  
AIR FORCE)**

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This morning, the Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities continues its hearings on the President's request for funding for military construction for the coming fiscal year. The focus of today's session will be on the budget request supporting the programs of the active and reserve components of the Department of the Navy, including those in support of the Marine Corps, and the Department of the Air Force.

Over the past month, I have expressed my deep concern with the continuing disinvestment of the Administration in military infrastructure. The budget request for the programs supporting the Department of the Navy and the Department of the Air Force unfortunately are part of the trend. Navy and Marine Corps military construction is proposed under this budget at just over \$468 million – 13 percent less than last year's request and 30 percent below current spending levels. The budget request for Air Force military construction of \$455 million is eight percent less than was requested last year and 33 percent below current spending levels. The military family housing accounts have been similarly reduced for both departments and the budget request for the reserve components is clearly not enough to plug immediate and critical problems let alone to keep pace with current and new mission requirements. While there are pockets of good news, such as the Air Force proposal to buyout the last of its gang latrine dormitory problem in FY1999, the overall trend is clearly negative.

In the aftermath of the last round of base closure and realignment actions in 1995, the Congress was assured by the military services and the Department of Defense that, with BRAC behind us, a renewed emphasis on taking care of the remaining infrastructure would result in real increases in the military construction and real property maintenance accounts in the outyears. We have arrived at the outyears and those assurances have never been realized. This year, the Congress should have received a budget proposal that included a significant emphasis on facilities modernization and recapitalization. Instead, as part of a largely budget-driven exercise, the services are speaking again of the need for more BRAC rounds with a promise that recapitalization will occur some time in the next decade.

Over the past three budget cycles, Congress has struggled to keep the reinvestment in enduring installations on track. Yet, each year and in spite of the \$2.1 billion in additional resources Congress has provided for the military construction and military family housing accounts in that period, we have fallen further and further behind. Quite simply, the Administration is disinvesting in military infrastructure faster than the Congress can provide additional resources. We may “get well” in the outyears of the current future years defense plan. But, based on recent history, call me a skeptic.